

Minutes of the Academic Affairs Committee Meeting
1110 - 1230 hours
3 May 2024
Smith Hall Board Room

Present:

Board Members	Staff	VMI Alumni Association
Mr. Adams	BG Moreschi	Dr. Gupton
Mr. Fain	COL McDonald	
Mr. Garcia	CAPT Sebastino	VMI Foundation
COL Inman	LTC Hagy	Mr. Prasnicky
Ms. Lord	Mrs. Forquer	

Ms. Lord called the meeting to order at 1112.

The minutes of the 26 January 2024 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee were unanimously approved (Attachment 1).

1. Changes in Faculty and Staff

The Academic Affairs Committee considered the Changes in the Faculty dated 12 April 2024 (Attachment 2). The Committee approved those Changes in the Faculty.

In response to a question from Mr. Fain about faculty recruiting, BG Moreschi reported we have generally had large pools of qualified candidates for most faculty openings. The exceptions have been in Economics and Business and in the engineering departments. BG Moreschi speculated that small candidate pools in these disciplines is due to the well-paying job opportunities available to graduates with master's degrees in these academic disciplines. Overall, we have been very successful in recent years in hiring our top candidates, and while multiple factors contribute to a candidate accepting a teaching position, the increases we have made in faculty salaries have certainly contributed to our successful recruiting.

2. Approval of Graduates

The Academic Affairs Committee considered the Graduation List dated 12 April 2024 for May 2024 graduates (Attachment 3). The Committee approved this preliminary list of graduates and granted to the Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty the authority to delete the names of cadets who do not meet the requirements for graduation and to add the names of graduates who may fulfill the requirements for graduation.

3. Approval of Jackson-Hope Grants

BG Moreschi reported that on 9 April 2024, the Jackson-Hope Board of Overseers funded five grant proposals for the 2023-24 through 2028-29 academic years for a total of \$1,702,000. The table below summarizes the grants.

1.	CIS Cadet Research Laboratory – Updated (2023-2024)	\$4,000
2.	Faculty Development (2024-2025)	\$153,000
3.	Faculty Recruiting (2024-2025)	\$70,000
4.	New Directions in Teaching and Research (2024-2025)	\$25,000
5.	VMI Center for Undergraduate Research (2024-2029)	\$1,450,000

BG Moreschi explained that the original CIS Cadet Research Laboratory grant, approved in April 2023, was in the amount of \$23,000. An additional \$4,000 was approved to account for additional costs above the original estimate.

The Committee unanimously approved the Jackson-Hope appropriations.

4. Approval of Changes to the Faculty Handbook

BG Moreschi briefed the Academic Affairs Committee on three proposed changes (Attachment 4) to the *Faculty Handbook – January 2024*. The proposed changes include the following:

- Changes to the “Tenure and Promotion Review Process” that would (a) move the due date for the submission of draft materials by tenure and promotion candidates to the department from 1 November to 15 October, and (b) add an opportunity for a promotion candidate to rebut or challenge departmental recommendations or minority reports.
- Add language to the “Tenure and Promotion Review Process” explicitly permitting tenure and promotion candidates to solicit and submit up to three letters of recommendation from experts external to VMI in their tenure and promotion review materials.
- Changes to the “Service Eligibility” clause governing the Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) that would prohibit members of the Tenure and Promotion Committee from serving on the FAC, and would direct FAC members who are appointed as Department Heads/senior administrators or (s)elected to the Tenure and Promotion Committee to resign their seats on the FAC.

The *Faculty Handbook* with the proposed changes is renamed the *Faculty Handbook – May 2024*.

The Committee unanimously approved the *Faculty Handbook – May 2024*.

5. Approval of Curricular Changes

BG Moreschi briefed the Academic Affairs Committee on Curricular Changes dated 12 April 2024 (Attachment 5) that have been approved by the Academic Board. These changes included the following:

- Programmatic Changes:
 - International Studies Major Curricular Changes
 - Replace Biology Concentrations with a Biology Minor
 - Physics Major Curricular Changes
 - Mechanical Engineering Major Curricular/Course Changes
 - Economics and Business Major Curricular Change

- Name Changes:
 - The Civil and Environmental Engineering Department proposed changing the name of CE 409 from “Hazardous Waste Treatment and Site Remediation” to “Environmental Site Remediation.”
 - The Chemistry department proposed changing the name of its “Chemistry, B.S. - Pre-Medical Track” to “Chemistry, B.S. - Biochemistry/Pre-Medical Track.”

- New Courses¹:
 - GR 333 – In the Shadow of the Berlin Wall: Germany from the Cold War to Reunification, 1961-1990 (3-0-3)
 - EE 461 – RF Circuit Design-I (2-2-3)
 - EE 462 – RF Circuit Design-II (2-2-3)
 - MA 339 – Introduction to Python (1-0-1)
 - MA 340 – Introduction to R Programming for Data Science and Statistics (1-0-1)
 - MA 349 – Introduction to VBA Programming (1-0-1)
 - IS 333 – Politics in the Middle East (3-0-3)
 - PY 101 – Fundamentals of Physics (3-0-3)
 - ME 426 – Mechatronics (3-0-3)
 - BU 212 – Principles of Accounting (3-0-3)

The Committee unanimously approved the proposed curricular changes.

¹ The numbers following the course designations (i.e., 3-0-3) indicate the number of lecture hours, lab hours, and total credit hours associated with the course. So, a 3-0-3 designation means the course requires three hours of lecture each week, zero lab hours, and the course is worth three credit hours.

7. State of the Academic Program

BG Moreschi reported on the following:

Women's Faculty Working Group

The Group was established two years ago and is led by five senior women faculty and mentored by LTG Gwen Bingham, the Floyd D. Gottwald, Jr. '43 Visiting Chair in Leadership and Ethics. LTG Bingham has met with the Group monthly, either in person or virtually. She has also met with various other women's groups – e.g., cadets, athletes, staff. The Group is considering its role going forward and how its leadership might change and provide opportunities for other women faculty. The group proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook, which should be presented in the fall, which would enable faculty who take parental/medical leave to extend the probationary period leading to their tenure review.

Administrative and Professional (A&P) Faculty Compensation Guidelines

The Institute Compensation Committee was charged with developing guidelines for A&P faculty salaries to be used in making hiring offers and for internal compensation equity considerations. Unlike the Teaching and Research (T&R) Faculty Compensation model, which provides a target salary for each T&R faculty member based on their academic discipline, academic rank, and years of experience, the Committee developed salary guidelines based on benchmark positions and median salaries based on an average of five years' experience in the position. The salary information used for the guidelines is based on the same data source used for the T&R model – i.e., the CUPA-HR (College and University Professionals Association for Human Resources) salary survey for all schools awarding bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees. Benchmark positions and salaries for some positions within the Finance and Support and the Commandant's organizations still need to be determined. Once that work is completed, the guidelines will be presented to the Superintendent for his review.

Innovation Programming

COL Cliff West is the Director of Innovation Programming and is responsible for developing relationships and providing direction to innovative programs supporting the academic program. BG Moreschi noted the following examples of the types of programs that fall under COL West's cognizance:

- The Summer Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Program, a five-week program during first summer session, which begins this summer;
- ARL (Army Research Lab) and NATO collaborations, which will provide internships for cadets as well as research opportunities;

- Collaborations related to the Cyber Defense Program, and the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative (CCI) also provide internship and research opportunities in computer science as well as in other disciplines.

Having a dedicated director to focus on these programs helps to ensure they receive the attention needed to progress forward and to enable us to expand these programs.

Peay Fellows

Peay Fellows receive a 2-year scholarship to attend graduate school. To receive a scholarship, the student must be interested in an academic discipline directly related to a major program offered by VMI. To be considered for the Peay Fellows program, a student would need to have the support of a VMI department head who would be willing to mentor and support the Fellow. In addition, the department head would need to consider the Fellow to be a viable candidate to join their faculty should a position be available once the Fellow completed his/her Ph.D. There is no commitment or obligation on the part of the Institute or the Fellow to teach at VMI, but it creates potential alumni candidates for future faculty positions or openings at the Institute.

Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 1232 hours.